

Commonwealth of Massachusetts



Urban Agenda Launch

October 5, 2015



Urban Agenda Overview



- The Baker-Polito Administration's Urban Agenda seeks to promote economic vitality and cultivate safer, stronger urban neighborhoods across Massachusetts.
- The Urban Agenda Economic Development grant program recognizes that urban communities face unique economic, workforce, and quality-of-life challenges.
- The Urban Agenda Economic Development grant program also recognizes that every community in Massachusetts possesses a unique set of assets, and that the path to economic opportunity lies in tapping into local assets, rather than in one-size-fits-all directives.



Urban Agenda Overview



- The Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development will distribute \$3 million in awards for the inaugural round of Urban Agenda grants: \$2 million in economic development grants, and \$1 million for housing development grants.
- A goal of the Urban Agenda Economic Development grants is to build leadership, collaboration, and capacity at the local level, which can unlock community-driven responses to local economic opportunities.
- Grants will seek to tap municipal and community leadership along with community based organizations and businesses to collectively drive economic development and pursue lasting change in their neighborhoods.



Grant Structure



Urban Agenda Grants will be awarded on a competitive basis. Grants will offer flexible funding to empower communities, and reward best practices in urban economic and housing development.

There are three types of grants:

- Economic Development Implementation Grants of up to \$500,000
- Planning and Technical Assistance Grants up to \$50,000
- Economic Development Housing Program Grants of up to \$200,000

During the grant cycle, funded programs will be required to share best practices learned throughout the program with a larger statewide community cohort.



Eligibility



- Grants will serve urban communities with household incomes under 90 percent of the state average.
- The Urban Agenda grants will serve both Gateway and non-Gateway cities, of varying sizes. Fifty-three urban communities are eligible to compete for grant funding.
- Municipal governments may be the lead applicant for these grants, but the grants are intended to support a coordinated group of community stakeholders. All project applications should have municipal support.
- One application per grant program is allowed per municipality, but in cities with populations exceeding 150,000, applications will be capped at the neighborhood level, rather than at the municipal level, enabling multiple applications from those cities.
- Municipalities may submit multiple applications for Housing Program grants. DHCD will issue a maximum of two awards per community.
- Grants may not supplant funding for other existing programs.



Economic Development Implementation Grants



Grants may be requested to fund a new program, or for expansion in scope and partnerships of existing program, targeting specific economic opportunities and workforce populations.

- **Economic Development Implementation Grants** will support communities across Massachusetts that can mobilize partnerships to leverage existing economic assets, target specific workforce populations, define their economic development and quality of life goals, and then deliver on those goals.
- **Priority Economic Development Activities:** Targeted workforce development, innovative vocational education activities, Main Streets and small business supports, mentorship for entrepreneurs.
- **Project examples:** Training at-risk populations for culinary careers, business plan training and entrepreneurial supports for women-, veteran-, and minority-owned businesses, maker spaces that engage youth in mechanical processes.



Economic Development Implementation Grants



- **Maximum Award:** \$500,000 (Projects of exceptional merit and complexity may be considered for higher awards.)
- **Grant use:** Identify a specific local economic asset; apply economic assets to specific workforce population; engage in innovative partnerships.
- **Eligible lead applicants:** Community-based organizations, municipalities.
- **Eligible project participants:** Community-based organizations, municipalities, community-based organizations, municipalities, educational institutions, private-sector business and umbrella groups.
- **Review criteria:** Vision and clarity; ability to execute; strength of partnerships; articulation of economic needs, target populations, and economic opportunities; proven track record; alignment with community vision.



Economic Development Planning and Technical Assistance Grants



- **Planning and Technical Assistance Grants** will bring residents and other stakeholders together for a facilitated process to identify opportunities for shared work on quality-of-life issues, and to build coalitions and social capital within the community.
- These grants may also build community coalitions that prepare communities to be more competitive for Urban Agenda implementation grants in future funding cycles.
- **Priority Economic Development Activities:** Community coalition building, quality-of-life planning, local leadership development and capacity building.
- **Project examples:** Actionable neighborhood-level planning exercises, community leadership development.



Economic Development Planning and Technical Assistance Grants



- **Maximum Award:** \$50,000
- **Grant use:** Identify opportunities for shared work on quality-of-life issues; encourage social capital building.
- **Eligible lead applicants:** Community-based organizations, municipalities.
- **Eligible project participants:** Community-based organizations, municipalities, community-based organizations, municipalities, educational institutions, private-sector business and umbrella groups.
- **Review criteria:** Vision and clarity; ability to execute; alignment with community vision.



Housing Program Grants



- **Housing Program Grants** will assist municipalities in expanding multi-family housing opportunities in urban communities.
- Grants will finance predevelopment and soft costs related to multi-family housing construction and adaptive re-use of surplus or underutilized property.
- Successful projects will demonstrate site control, financial feasibility, and consistency with prior community planning at the site.
- **Priority Economic Development Activities:** Advancing multi-family housing that contributes to the economic and social vitality of communities; accelerating housing construction on publicly-owned land; and creating housing serving a range of incomes, ages, and household sizes.
- **Eligible activities include:** Schematic designs and site plans, community and resident engagement, market studies, financing plans, design documentation, engineering and environmental assessment, environmental remediation, and zoning review.



Housing Program Grants



- **Maximum Award:** \$200,000 (Projects of exceptional merit and complexity may be considered for higher awards.)
- **Grant use:** Support the construction of multi-family housing by financing predevelopment and soft costs.
- **Eligible lead applicants:** Municipalities, local housing and redevelopment authorities.
- **Eligible project participants:** Community-based developers, private developers.
- **Review criteria:** Vision and clarity; alignment with community vision; alignment with prior planning process; evidence of site control; financial feasibility; site utility infrastructure; consistency with fair housing and sustainable development policies; project density.
- The Department of Housing and Community Development will administer Urban Agenda Housing Program grants.



Next Steps



For more information and updates: **www.mass.gov/hed**

Important Dates/Deadlines:

- Applications open: October 5
- Letter of intent submission: October 19
- Initial applicants' call: October 21, 12-1pm
- Second applicants' call: November 16, 12-1pm
- Application deadline: December 11
- Grants awarded: Mid-January, 2016

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